

Variation in openly used person constructions in Border Karelian dialects

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This paper is based on my doctoral thesis in progress which addresses openly used person forms. Openly used person form does not refer to any specific individual or a group of individuals but to a loosely specific collective. In literature, such person forms are referred with various terms, including *generic* and *impersonal*. (I. a. Siewierska 2004: 210213, Bhat 2004: 4142.) The term *open reference* is used mainly in Finnish linguistics (e.g. Laitinen 2006, HelasvuoLaitinen 2006).

In Standard Finnish, the most common means of open reference and by far the most examined is the 3rd person singular. Yet, in many other Finnic languages, in Karelian and Estonian for instance, the more frequent one is the openly used 2nd person singular. Interestingly, it has originally belonged to the Eastern Finnish dialects as well.

The aim of this paper is to examine the open uses of the 2nd and the 3rd person singular in dialects situated between the borderland of the Eastern Finnish dialects and their closest cognates, Karelian languages. Until recently, surprisingly little attention has been paid to this contact situation particularly from the syntactic point of view (however, see Sarhimaa 1999). For the present, an unsolved question in linguistics is how these Border Karelian dialects containing ingredients from both Finnish and Karelian should be called.

The preliminary main data consists of dialect interviews recorded in the 1960s. In addition to the syntactic classification of openly used person constructions, the data is also analysed according to discourse functions. In other words, in what kinds of text types - such as narrative, description and argument - open constructions occur. A preliminary qualitative analysis of the data clearly indicates that the openly used 2nd and 3rd person singular have distinct distributions both syntactically and semantically.